
JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Morning Alert - Friday, November 4, 2016

The following information reflects the reporting of the cited news media and does not reflect the opinions of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Japan Media Highlights is intended for USG use only and should not be forwarded. Visit the website [here](#). For more information, contact TokyoMATT@state.gov.

Please fill out our short online [Readership Survey!](#)

HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK, TBS, and Fuji TV gave top play to reports that South Korean President Park is expected to release a statement today regarding the arrest of a close acquaintance of hers on Thursday. According to NHK, the South Korean media is speculating that the president may announce that she is willing to be questioned by prosecutors. NTV and TV Asahi led with reports on the top 30 hit products of the year.



Top stories in national dailies included the effectuation today of the Paris Agreement and follow-up reports on the scandal involving President Park.

INTERNATIONAL

Japan and Russia to select 30 priority projects for economic cooperation

All Friday morning papers reported on Economic Minister Seko's meetings with Russia's Economic Development Minister Ulyukayev and Energy Minister Novak in Moscow on Thursday. Seko told reporters after the meetings that the two nations agreed to select about 30 priority projects for their economic cooperation in preparation for President Putin's visit to Japan in mid-

December. Nikkei quoted Seko as telling the press afterward that improved economic relations between Tokyo and Moscow will become an important foundation for talks on a peace treaty. Asahi wrote that in the hope that progress in talks about economic cooperation will help resolve the Northern Territories issue, Japan is trying to find ways to promote economic cooperation with Russia without annoying the U.S. and Europe in light of Russia's annexation of Crimea.

Abe, Suu Kyi affirm closer bonds

All Thursday morning papers gave prominent coverage to a meeting on Wednesday between Prime Minister Abe and visiting Burmese Foreign Minister Aung San Suu Kyi, during which the premier pledged some 800 billion yen in economic support by the GOJ and the Japanese business community for the impoverished country in the next five years in order to deepen bilateral ties. Abe also pledged support for Myanmar (Burma) to achieve peace with ethnic minorities. The dailies said Tokyo is keen to extend cooperation to Myanmar as the nation is "extremely important for Japan from a geopolitical standpoint," in the words of an unnamed senior Japanese diplomat, so as to hold China's growing presence in the region in check.

In a related development, most Friday papers reported on Aung San Suu Kyi's meeting with Foreign Minister Kishida on Thursday, during which Kishida expressed Japan's intention to give full support to the new administration of Myanmar.

LDP's Nikai holds talks with Indian PM Modi

Friday morning's Yomiuri and Sankei wrote that LDP Secretary General Nikai held talks with Indian Prime Minister Modi in New Delhi on Thursday and gave a letter from Prime Minister Abe to the Indian leader, who is scheduled to visit Japan on Nov. 10-12. Nikai told reporters afterward that it is important for Japan to promote exchanges with India because the nation has unlimited potential for development. Nikkei wrote that Nikai offered Japan's support for India's high-speed railway and disaster prevention projects.

Kazakhstani President to deliver speech in Hiroshima

NHK reported this morning on its one-on-one interview with President of Kazakhstan Nazarbayev, which was conducted ahead of his visit to Tokyo and Hiroshima from Nov. 6-9. During the interview, the president said he is planning to deliver a speech in Hiroshima since many people in Kazakhstan are still suffering from radiation caused by nuclear tests conducted more than 450 times during the Soviet Union era. He reportedly said: "I would like to send a message from Hiroshima to announce my opposition to nuclear tests and to call for the world to unite in eliminating nuclear weapons... Japan and Kazakhstan are leading the world in moves toward denuclearization." President Nazarbayev also reportedly talked about North Korea and said: "The existence of nuclear weapons does not guarantee a nation's security." He also stressed that Kazakhstan has been able to build trust with other nations and develop its economy while abolishing the nuclear weapons it inherited from the former Soviet Union.

More Japanese trust South Korea

Thursday's Mainichi published the results of a survey taken in Japan, China, and South Korea by a non-profit pollster that found that 23% of Japanese said they can trust South Korea, up 8 points from a year ago, while 57.6% said they cannot, down 12 points. Some 22% of Koreans said they can trust Japan, while 75.7% said they cannot. More than 80% of Japanese and Koreans said the U.S. is a trustworthy partner.

SECURITY

GOJ gives up on Diet approval of bill on updating ACSA with U.S.

Friday morning's Mainichi wrote that it learned from several sources connected to the GOJ and the ruling coalition on Thursday that they have decided to give up on the idea of approving a bill on the updated Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) with the U.S. during the current Diet session in order to prioritize the TPP legislation and the Paris Agreement ratification. Under the new agreement, Japan will expand the scope of its logistical support for the U.S. military, including providing ammunition, even when Japan is not under direct attack, following the effectuation of the new security laws in March. The GOJ will seek early approval of the bill during the ordinary Diet session next year. Noting that the updated agreement was signed by Ambassador Kennedy and Foreign Minister Kishida on Sept. 26, more than a year after the enactment of the new security legislation, the paper speculated that the U.S. may become frustrated with delays on the Japanese side.

Japan, U.S. to narrow scope of civilian component under SOFA

Thursday's Mainichi took up press remarks made on Wednesday by LDP Policy Research Council Chairman Motegi who said the USG and the GOJ have been discussing drafting a document that would limit the scope of the civilian component to be covered under the SOFA. After a meeting with Ambassador Kennedy during which they reportedly discussed U.S. base issues, the Japanese politician told the press: "Drawing up a concrete document is necessary in order to prevent a recurrence [of the serious incident involving a Kadena-based civilian worker in Okinawa in April]. The two governments have already started consultations." According to a GOJ source, the two sides are looking to forge a consensus this year.

ASDF conducts joint training with RAF in Aomori

Thursday's Asahi reported that a joint drill performed at an SDF base in Misawa, Aomori Prefecture, by ASDF and UK Royal Air Force fighters was disclosed to the press on Wednesday, noting that this was the first time for the SDF to conduct joint training in Japan with a foreign counterpart other than the U.S. military. The daily claimed that the session was intended to raise the level of military cooperation between Japan and the UK to a "quasi-alliance" that will supplement the U.S.-Japan

alliance, pointing out that they have already started negotiations on concluding a bilateral acquisition and cross-servicing agreement (ACSA).

Iwakuni chief embraces F-35 deployment

Thursday's Tokyo Shimbun wrote that Iwakuni Mayor Fukuda said on Wednesday that Iwakuni will accept the planned F-35 deployment at MCAS Iwakuni because in his view the state-of-the-art aircraft presents no problems in regard to noise or safety. However, he called for the U.S. military and the central government to pay maximum consideration when operating the aircraft to ensure that its operation will not have an adverse impact on local residents.

MSDF ship to transport U.S. troops in training

Thursday's Sankei printed a Kyodo piece on a U.S. Pacific Command announcement that the MSDF's destroyer "Hyuga" will sealift U.S. troops and equipment in a mock operation to win back a remote island occupied by the enemy. Another SDF ship will also participate in the bilateral "Keen Sword" exercise to take place in the Pacific off Guam.

POLITICS

GOJ committed to passing TPP legislation at Lower House ahead of U.S. election

All Thursday papers reported on the delay in a Lower House panel vote on the TPP legislation due to another gaffe by Agricultural Minister Yamamoto, whom the administration is determined to defend despite the opposition camp's strong demands for his resignation. The GOJ has concluded that Yamamoto's resignation would not necessarily contribute to the enactment of the regional free trade legislation. Instead, the GOJ is committed to holding a committee vote on Friday and obtaining Lower House approval at a plenary session on Nov. 8 based on the assessment that Diet deliberations, if prolonged further, may hit a snag depending on the results of the U.S. presidential election on the same day. The opposition camp led by the Democratic Party may boycott deliberations at the Upper House if the administration and the ruling coalition choose to railroad the bills.

Seven out of ten Diet members support constitutional revision

Thursday's Yomiuri led with the results of its survey of parliamentarians showing that some 73% think the Constitution should be amended, while 16% said it should not. About 48% said the Constitution should be revised with regard to "maintaining an organization for self-defense."

ECONOMY

Uber keen to make inroads into Japan by 2020

Thursday's Asahi took up press remarks on Wednesday by Uber Technologies executive David Plouffe, who expressed hope to launch Uber's "ride-sharing" business in Japan by 2020 so that

Japanese people can use the service in time for the Tokyo Olympics. Referring to an existing Japanese regulation that potentially renders ride sharing illegal, he said: “There are countries where ride sharing has become possible as a result of the establishment of new rules. We would like to build on this experience to coordinate with the Japanese government.”

Japanese Twitter users top 40 million

Thursday's Asahi reported on the announcement made by Twitter Japan on Wednesday that the number of Japanese users of its service exceeded 40 million in September for the first time, up 14% from a year ago. Noting that this was the biggest increase worldwide, the paper said the American social networking service operator is increasingly relying on the Japanese market in view of its recent dismal performance at home.

AMBASSADOR

Ambassador Kennedy comments on TPP, U.S.-Japan relations

Friday morning's Mainichi wrote that during a speech at a meeting of U.S. and Japanese business leaders in Tokyo on Thursday, Ambassador Kennedy commented on the GOJ's efforts to seek Diet approval of the TPP agreement during the current Diet session by saying that it is very significant that Japan is making preparations for the ratification of the agreement and that the move will set an example for the U.S. and other nations to follow. The paper added that concerning the approval of the agreement by the U.S. Congress, the Ambassador said that the TPP will be the top priority in the upcoming lame-duck session. The paper conjectured the Ambassador's statement may give a push to the GOJ's efforts to ratify the agreement at an early date. Sankei wrote that during her keynote speech the Ambassador expressed the view that the results of the upcoming presidential election will not have a major impact on U.S.-Japan relations by saying that the strong U.S.-Japan relationship has been above partisanship and will not change.